Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 – 15 (cancelled)

16. (new) A process for developing an exposed heat-sensitive printing plate precursor, comprising:
    (a) producing an alkaline developer by
        (i) dissolving such an amount of an alkali component selected from alkali silicates, alkali hydroxides, Na_3PO_4, and K_3PO_4 and mixtures thereof in water that a pH of more than 12 is obtained,
        (ii) dissolving a stabilizer selected from M_2CO_3, $MHCO_3$, or a mixture of 2 or more thereof, wherein each M is independently selected from Li, Na, K and NR'_4 and each R' independently represents H or C_1-C_4 alkyl, in the solution obtained in step (i), wherein the amount of added stabilizer is such that the amount of the added carbonate anion is 1.5 to 20 wt%, based on the total weight of the developer composition, and
        (iii) optionally dissolving at least one additive selected from glycols; amphoteric, non-ionic and cationic surfactants; anti-foaming agents; biocides; complexing agents and organic solvents either before or after the dissolution of the stabilizer in step (ii).
    (b) contacting an exposed heat-sensitive printing plate precursor with the developer composition obtained in step (a), and
    (c) rinsing with water.

17. (new) Process according to claim 16, wherein the added stabilizer is Na_2CO_3.

18. (new) Process according to claim 16 wherein the stabilizer is added in such an amount that the amount of the added carbonate anion is 2.5 to 12 wt%.

19. (new) Process according to claim 16 wherein the alkaline component comprises an alkali silicate.

20. (new) Process according to claim 16 wherein the pH value of the solution obtained in step (i) is in the range of from 13 to 14.

21. (new) Process according to claim 16 wherein the radiation-sensitive coating of the printing plate precursor comprises a phenolic resin.

22. (new) A process for developing an exposed heat-sensitive printing plate precursor, comprising

(a) contacting the exposed heat-sensitive printing plate precursor with an alkaline developer, and

(b) rinsing with water,

wherein the alkaline developer has been prepared by:

(i) dissolving such an amount of an alkali component selected from alkali silicates, alkali hydroxides, Na_3PO_4, and K_3PO_4 and mixtures thereof in water that a pH of more than 12 is obtained,

(ii) dissolving a stabilizer selected from M_2CO_3, $MHCO_3$, or a mixture of 2 or more thereof, wherein each M is independently selected from Li, Na, K and NR'_4 and each R' independently represents H or C_1-C_4 alkyl, in the solution obtained in step (i), wherein the amount of added stabilizer is such that the amount of the added carbonate anion is 1.5 to 20 wt%, based on the total weight of the developer composition, and

(iii) optionally dissolving at least one additive selected from glycols; amphoteric, non-ionic and cationic surfactants; anti-foaming agents; biocides; complexing agents and organic solvents either before or after the dissolution of the stabilizer in step (ii).